



Public Involvement

Numerous organizations, businesses, property owners, and residents could be impacted by future transportation improvements along SH 288. Public involvement activities were developed as a critical component of this study to allow impacted parties to have a role in the future of the corridor. Major components of this study's public outreach program included:

- ◆ Meetings with the project Steering Committee;
- ◆ Conducting Corridor Stakeholder Meetings;
- ◆ Holding General Public Meetings;
- ◆ Creating and distributing a series of Newsletters; and,
- ◆ Providing/maintaining study information on TxDOT's Website.

STEERING COMMITTEE

An initial Agency Coordination meeting was conducted at the beginning of the study on June 9, 2003 at TxDOT's Houston District office. Meeting participants included TxDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Austin, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Council on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), Brazoria County, Harris County, representative for Texas State Senator Mike Jackson, Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA), Mayor of the City of Manvel, Brazoria County Commissioner, Mayor of the City of Angleton, Iowa Colony, and Texas Medical Center. The primary purpose of this meeting was to introduce the SH 288 Corridor Feasibility Study to representatives of involved area agencies and to solicit their input regarding corridor issues and needs.



A Steering Committee was established for this project to offer policy decisions and guide the technical development of the study. Three Steering Committee meetings were conducted during the study.

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Steering Committee Meeting One, June 9th, 2003

The primary purpose of the first Steering Committee meeting was to introduce the SH 288 Corridor Feasibility Study to involved area community representatives and agencies, and to receive their concerns regarding corridor issues and needs. The participants in this meeting included TxDOT, FHWA Austin, H-GAC, Brazoria County Economic Development Alliance Brazoria County, Brazosport Chamber of Commerce, Harris County Precinct 1, representative for Texas Senator Kyle Janek, Brazoria County Commissioner Precinct 1, City of Pearland, Mayor of the City of Pearland, Mayor of the City of Manvel, Iowa Colony City Council, City of Lake Jackson, Alvin Chamber of Commerce, Grand Parkway Association, Alvin Economic Development Foundation, Texas Medical Center, and a Texas State Representative.

Steering Committee Meeting Two, April 26th, 2004

The purpose of the second Steering Committee meeting was to review comments received at the first series of public meetings held in September 2003, present the public information meeting materials for the second series of public meetings in May 2004, review the initial evaluation of the "Universe of Alternatives", and present the "Viable Alternatives" that were carried into the detailed evaluation phase of the study. Participants in this meeting that were not represented in the first meeting include members from METRO, Harris County, Brazoria County Engineer, Mayor of the City of Angleton, Brazoria County Commissioner Precinct 4, Ron Carter Dealership, City of Alvin, and the Greater Houston Partnership.

Steering Committee Meeting Three, November 17th, 2004

The purpose of the third and final Steering Committee meeting was to review comments received at the second series of public meetings held in May 2004, present the materials for the final series of public meetings held November 30 - December 2, 2004, and review and receive comments on the recommended Most Feasible Alternative. Participants at this meeting that did not attend the previous Steering Committee meetings included representatives from the City of Houston,



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Pearland Chamber of Commerce, and the Pearland Economic Development Corporation.

CORRIDOR STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

As part of this study, meetings were conducted with communities and agencies located in or impacted by the SH 288 corridor between June and October 2003. The primary purpose of these meetings was to obtain information, suggestions, and concerns in their respective areas of the corridor. These meetings provided an understanding at the beginning of the study as to what the concerns and issues were with the various community members. The participants included H-GAC, Harris County, Brazoria County Engineers Office, Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA), Brazosport Chamber Area of Commerce, City of Angleton, City of Houston, City of Pearland, Alvin-Manvel, Iowa Colony, Grand Parkway Association, Houston SuperSpeedway, Texas Medical Center, Shadow Creek Ranch, and the Union Pacific Railroad.

The primary corridor issues that were identified through these stakeholder meetings include the following:

Transportation Issues

- ◆ Congestion between Houston and Pearland;
- ◆ Improved access to Texas Medical Center and Pearland;
- ◆ Frontage roads between Beltway 8 and FM 518;
- ◆ Grade separations/interchanges at critical locations;
- ◆ Safety issues at existing at-grade intersections;
- ◆ Auxiliary lanes;
- ◆ Proposed Grand Parkway connection;
- ◆ Traffic back-ups from major off-ramps; and,
- ◆ Emergency evacuation.

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Engineering Issues

- ◆ Bottleneck at IH 610 due to lane reduction;
- ◆ Direct ramp connectors at Beltway 8 and FM 518;
- ◆ Substandard ramp configurations;
- ◆ Narrow right-of-way in Lake Jackson;
- ◆ Low bridge crossing at Brays Bayou; and,
- ◆ Flooding.

Environmental/Social Issues

- ◆ Existing and proposed residential and commercial developments;
- ◆ Heavily industrialized areas;
- ◆ Woodlands and wildlife habitat; and,
- ◆ Stream crossings and wetlands.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

A total of three series of public meetings were held as part of this project with each series consisting of three meetings at different locations along the study corridor.



Series One, September 16th to 18th, 2003

The first series of public meetings were held in Lake Jackson, Pearland, and Houston and presented the project purpose and objectives, evaluation process, and existing corridor conditions. Over 400 citizens attended the first series of public meetings and more than 260 comment forms were received. The majority of attendees agreed that transportation improvements were needed along the SH 288 corridor and interim short-term improvements were also encouraged to be implemented as soon as possible. Primary types of improvements desired included construction of additional travel lanes, implementation of rail, addition of HOV lanes, and construction of overpasses/underpasses.



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Series Two, May 4th to 6th, 2004

The second series of public meetings were held in the same three areas as the first series and were attended by over 150 people. The purpose of these meetings was to present the results of the initial evaluation of alternative transportation improvements, and to solicit public input on the proposed Viable Alternatives recommended for further consideration in the detailed evaluation phase. Over 50 comment forms were provided to the study team. The public was open to all modes of transportation (including SOV/HOV lanes, light and commuter rail, and managed lanes), and identified significant improvement needs along SH 288 primarily from US 59 to SH 6.

Series Three, November 30th to December 2nd, 2004

The final series of public meetings were also held in Pearland, Houston, and Angleton and presented the recommended Most Feasible Alternative. Over 150 people attended these meetings and approximately 50 comment forms were received. The majority of the comments received from the public indicated strong support and expedited implementation of the recommended Most Feasible Alternative, including a high priority for light or commuter rail along the FM 521 (Almeda Road) corridor.

NEWSLETTERS

Regular, ongoing communications with elected officials and members of the community was an essential part of the public involvement process. A total of three newsletters were prepared and distributed to persons included on the project's mailing list.

The first newsletter, mailed in September 2003, introduced and explained the study process and notified readers of the first series of public meetings. Approximately 1,100 copies of this first newsletter were mailed prior to the first series of public meetings. The second newsletter, distributed in April 2004, explained the progress of the study and the Universe of Alternatives under consideration.

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The final newsletter will provide a summary review and discussion of the recommended Most Feasible Alternative and the comments received from the final series of public meetings. This newsletter is anticipated to be distributed after presenting the recommended Most Feasible Alternative to the Houston-Galveston Area Council's Transportation Policy Council (TPC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in August/September 2005. There are nearly 2,000 recipients on the mailing list for this final newsletter.

Newsletters were also distributed at public meetings and were posted on TxDOT's web site. Extra copies of the newsletters and questionnaires were given to representatives of TxDOT Houston and members of the Consultant Team for their general distribution.

WEBSITE

Information regarding this study was provided on TxDOT's website (www.dot.state.tx.us) and updated regularly to keep the public informed of the status of the study.